

LETTERS

ON

Different Subjects,

In FOUR VOLUMES;

Amongst which are interspers'd the

ADVENTURES.

OF

ALPHONSE,

After the Destruction of *Lisbon*.

By the AUTHOR of *The unfortunate Mother's
Advice to her absent Daughters.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXVI.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

IT must be superfluous to express
the high and grateful sense the au-
thor entertains of the honour conferred
on her, and the following work, by
the great and noble names with which
it is graced; neither her obligations, or
her gratitude are lessen'd by her not
being the object of that bounty
which, by some, has been extended
with a charitable view; these she is
convinced will not find the pleasure,
unavoidably arising to themselves from
the exertion of their benevolence, di-
minished by their being made ac-
quainted with the true motive to this
method of publication: This she can-
not do in a manner less tiresome to
them, or less injurious to others, than

The P R E F A C E.

by inserting her answer to the anxious enquiry of a friend on seeing her first advertisement in the public papers,

To ——

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE earnest manner in which you desire immediately to know my reason for an advertisement you express so great a disapprobation of, together with the obliging, and most generous offer subjoined, give me inexpressible pleasure by affording a fresh proof of the sincerity and warmth of that inestimable friendship I have long so happily experienced: Your anxiety will be removed by knowing that your fears concerning me are groundless.—No new misfortune has, I thank God, besal'n me, nor am I so bad an economist as not to make my income supply all my own wants, and, in some degree, relieve those of others. Having satisfied you in this point, I must

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must beg that your opinion upon the other may be for a while suspended ; and before you condemn the method of my intended publication, permit me to propose a few questions to you, leaving a thousand collateral circumstances to be added when we meet, which I hope will be very soon.

Suppose an honest and worthy man advances a sum of money at the earnest request of a gentleman, under his own hand, for the support of his wife and children while a suit in Chancery is depending, commenced by him to deprive that wife of the benefit of a father's will ; if that gentleman declines the payment, screening himself either under the good nature and unwillingness of the creditor to offend, or under statutes of limitation, or otherwise, would it not be excusable, nay laudable in the wife to exert her utmost endeavours, by every honest method, to discharge such sum advanced ? especially if she should be only tenant for

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for life, and, consequently, excluded from borrowing money on her estate with safety to the lender ? And should the creditor support one of the best of characters, be deservedly esteemed by all who know him as a most benevolent and friendly man, one of strict honour himself, and from thence naturally averse to any doubts concerning others, would not those be doubly culpable who left him to the disagreeable alternative of either fitting down with the loss to himself and family, or commencing a suit that might be more painful to a man of his disposition ? Suppose also, that previous notice had been given to the gentleman of his wife's design, could she, after having waited many weeks to give him time for deliberation, be justly blamed for carrying that design into execution ? Make this case mine, my dear friend, and say, would you then condemn me for taking *this* method to satisfy such a demand ? It may perhaps lower me in the opinion, and

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and attract the censure of that unthinking part of mankind who pass their judgment on actions without taking those motives into the account which alone can determine their nature; but you, my friend, will feel how infinitely the obligations of justice, and honour must preponderate in the minds of the great and good, by whom alone I wish to be approv'd.

Let me hear your sentiments by the return of the post, which I shall wait impatiently for, as your approbation will ever be essential to the happiness of

Your

Unalterable affectionate,

S. P.

Some apology to the public may perhaps be necessary for those letters which, being intended only to point out

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out a private character, may appear cold and unentertaining to the generality of readers: But it was impossible to let slip such an opportunity of placing in a true light those little circumstances which, accumulated, often very unjustly stamp a character; especially as some may have been seriously occupied in examining, or blaming that conduct, which has unfortunately been made too publicly the object of attention; for them those letters are inserted, and others, who are wholly unacquainted with, or unconcerned about the person they relate to, will not perhaps be sorry for the respite of passing them over.

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Y.

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N. B. Those Names which have been omitted in this List, either by neglect, or otherwise of the Booksellers, shall be inserted, with any future Subscribers, in the two last Volumes.

LETTER I.

To Mrs. G——s.

DEAR MADAM,

THE invariable inclination of my heart to oblige a person so truly dear to me, would with pleasure have led me to an immediate compliance with any request of yours ; but this affords me a double satisfaction, by giving me the opportunity of doing justice to a much injured friend, while I gratify the earnest desire you express to be acquainted

VOL. I.

B

with

with the most interesting particulars of her life ; and those events which have conspired to lead her to the unalterable resolution of retiring from the world, to enjoy, in the virtuous and rational society of a few invaluable friends, the most perfect happiness attainable in this state of existence.

Besides the necessary relation of a variety of incidents, there are so many intricate appearances to be cleared up, that to give you a general knowledge of her history will be a work of time, and furnish sufficient matter for our whole winter's correspondence ; more patience will be necessary than is natural to your lively turn ; for since my late illness I am not

not always equally able to bear the fatigue of writing long letters, but will promise to give all the leisure hours my health will permit to this employment, and more, I know you love me too well to desire.

There is something so very peculiar in the character of my friend Mrs. P——, that it is no very easy matter to give a just description of it. She was known to me as early as I was capable of knowing any thing, and so perfect, so unreserved a friendship has ever subsisted between us, that not her most secret thoughts have been hid from my inspection; yet in attempting to draw her portrait, I feel the impossibility of giving those imperceptible touches

to it, which alone could convey the perfect resemblance; defective therefore must be the idea which any person can form of her from the most accurate description. Her general acquaintance are totally ignorant of her character; to her peculiar friends only is she known, and those are very few; her notions of friendship being carried to so exalted an height, that not one person in ten thousand is capable of coming up to them.—Having premised the difficulty of the undertaking, by way of excuse for all the faults there may be in the execution, shall do my best to make you acquainted with the true character of the Lady in question; without which it will be impossible to comprehend many parts of her history.

To

To you it is needless to say any thing of her understanding, since there cannot be a better proof of that, than the high esteem you express for her, and that deference which, on all occasions, I have seen you pay to her judgment: Yet, in the early part of life, an extream vivacity, and an uninterrupted flow of extravagantly high spirits, occasioned a thousand improprieties in her conduct, which, odd as it may sound, her early reason, instead of restraining, led her into, and furnished sophistical arguments to justify, even while she evidently saw the probable consequences. Many instances of this truth will appear in the sequel. Her genius you are no stranger to; her capacity is quick; by much too

quick, as it gave her a distaste, when young, to all those studies which require any application; and, therefore, tho' she had masters constantly to instruct her in musick, geography, languages, &c. she made no greater proficiency in either, than could be attained without trouble to herself. Her disposition is so naturally humane and benevolent, that she will never allow the forgiveness of injuries to be in her any virtue, but merely the result of self love; alledging, that to keep alive any degree of resentment for ill usage, would be a continual torment to her own mind; and, consequently, that her readiness to pardon all offences ought to be imputed only to the desire of ease; from this opinion her friends dissent;

but

but whatever be the motive, certain it is, that she was never known to do an ill natured thing to any person, how great soever the provocation received; that no one ever acknowledged a fault to her, who did not obtain an immediate and most perfect forgiveness. I am sure I may venture to say that her heart is truly good. In her friendships she has an inexpressible tenderness peculiar to herself, a sort of tenderness that admits not of description; and which no person can comprehend who has not been a witness to it; in these she pays no other regard to the difference of sex, than what the superiority of understanding, and the strength of mental powers demand. The passion, to which the name of love is often im-

properly affixed, she ever held in the most despicable light; as believing it unavoidably destructive of that exalted esteem which is the only firm basis of a perfect affection. She never professed a friendship without feeling in her own breast all that ought to be connected with that profession, in its most extensive sense, and never gave the name of friend to a person, whose interest, peace, and happiness, were not so dear to her as to be preferred, on every occasion, to her own; an equal return she naturally expected from those who made equal professions; but in this expectation was frequently deceived, before reason had gained sufficient strength to regulate her judgment; and 'twas not till after many years
expe-

experience, and repeated disappointments, she could be persuaded to believe, how very few were capable of that sort of disinterested tenderness, her bosom felt for those who appeared worthy of it; much less, that it was next to impossible for any young man to be perfectly sensible of her merit, and feel for her all the affection such a sensibility must create, unmixed with any degree of that sort of passion she wished not to inspire.

I see, my dear Madam, your astonishment that a woman of her understanding could indulge so absurd a supposition; 'tis indeed the weakest part of my friend's character, which I grieve to repeat, but find it impossible to draw a veil over, because, on the

the unwearied pursuit of this fantastic idol of her heart, turns almost all the principal events of her life—What shall I say in excuse for it? all of human race have some peculiar foible that seems to be inseparably interwoven in their constitution---this was hers---nor will, I believe, ever be relinquished; neither is there now any reason to wish it might; for having travelled beyond that period of life, wherein any personal attraction can be supposed to remain, she need no longer fear any mixture of this passion, in the affectionate friendship of sensible men, who are pleased with her conversation, love her virtues, and can be attached only to the unalterable qualities of her mind; this is one great source of her present

hap-

happiness, and she often rejoices in the decay of that outward form which was once an insuperable bar to those social and refined pleasures she most delighted in, and now daily uninterruptedlj enjoys in the steady and invaluable attachment of a few virtuous friends of elevated understandings, or uncommon genius, by whose conversation she is equally improved and entertained.

The vexation, and unhappiness, intailed by frequent disappointment in her chimerical expectations, may surely be allowed a sufficient punishment for the indulgence of them; yet to these the world will add a thousand ill-natured, and undeserved reflections, nor can it indeed be denied,

nied, that such reflections are in some measure justified by appearances, from which that world must be allowed to form its opinion.

If, in the early part of life, she could have established a little rational society of females, capable of that disinterested friendship she had conceived so exalted an Idea of, I am convinced she would have been the happiest of all human beings, and as void of censure, as she really is of guilt; but several instances of the ingratitude and perfidy of two sensible girls of her own age (whom she tenderly loved, and who, during the warmest professions of friendship to her, misrepresented all her actions to others, and endeavoured privately to

do

do her every injury in their power) induced her to seek amongst the other sex, that sort of society which these, and similar instances, led her to believe there was little probability of finding in her own ; without giving due weight to the objections of another kind that must there arise.

Her person I never thought handsome, yet she was generally admired, and, for some years, a reigning toast. The love of admiration was her ruling passion, but that was confined to her understanding and good qualities ; compliments paid to her person never gave her pleasure ; on the contrary, she treated all those with contempt who thus addressed her, even in that season of life when the mind

mind is most apt to be intoxicated by such sort of adulation. She knew herself ; was conscious of her virtues, and not ignorant of her faults ; ever ready to acknowledge the latter, but, satisfied with their not being of that atrocious kind which could be denominated crimes, chose rather to persist in, than rectify them ; and was at more pains to reconcile some parts of her conduct to her own judgment, than it would have cost her to have made that conduct such as might have been almost a perfect pattern for imitation.

I have now, my dear Madam, given you the outline of a character, the singularity of which makes it difficult to treat with that degree of

pre-

precision I could wish; but the quickness of your imagination will easily supply those delicate touches, which exceed my ability, if not the power of language, to describe.

From this sketch you will be convinced that the world has been, in almost every instance, mistaken in its opinion of my friend; and, on this mistake, imputed all her actions to motives diametrically opposite to those which produced them. By entering thoroughly into her peculiar turn, you will yourself be able to form a more accurate judgment of her past conduct. The favourable impression that a few months acquaintance has made on your heart will dispose you to see her, through every

every part of life, what she has really been; that is, even with all her faults, truly worthy of your friendship, which is all I would wish to say of those who are dear to me.—You are both very slow in forming strong attachments, but equally firm in adhering inviolably to them; and I make no doubt of seeing you one day as dear to each other, as you both are to your most sincerely

Affectionate, &c.

L E T-

LETTER II.

To Miss Louisa ——.

THE affection, my dear Louisa, that from your earliest infancy I have entertained for you, is both justified and improved by the general propriety of your own conduct. Nothing could be more prudent than your behaviour to Lady L---, after the cruel treatment you have received from her. Contempt was the only suitable return to a malicious endeavour that was beneath resentment. The unjust aspersion on your character, without injuring you, has covered its author with disgrace: By the care

of Mrs. C----l, who traced the report to its foundation, it is publickly known to be the invention of Lady L----, and her supposed motives for it redound more, if possible, to her dishonour than the invention itself. This is the deserved punishment, which it is pity all of the same class do not meet with.

Your sentiments on the forgiveness of injuries are perfectly just; and I am much pleased with your warm expressions of a disposition that is the surest foundation of future happiness to yourself. The injunction to return good for evil is one of the noblest precepts of Christianity, and to find that a difficult task, is an infallible sign of a bad heart. A benevolent
mind

mind enjoys infinitely more pleasure in pardoning offences, than a vindictive one can receive from retaliation ; the desire of revenge is a continual torment to the breast it inhabits, and the person incapable of happiness, who can delight in giving misery to others. The virtue of forgiveness is literally its own reward, because the human mind is not capable of a more pleasing sensation than that which results from the exercise of it : With this, my dear Louisa, be content, nor entail disappointment on yourself by the expectation of those grateful returns, which are seldom met with. The person who has once designedly injured you, conscious of deserving your hatred, from that moment regards you as an

enemy ; and, on every occasion, knowing you have reason to be so, treats you as such. 'Tis therefore necessary to be always upon your guard against a person who has once used you ill, nor is this prudent care inconsistent with the most perfect forgiveness. In the present case, nothing could be more commendable than your generous defence of Lady L----'s character, in a point where you had reason to believe her unjustly accused, even after you had been informed of her cruel attempt to ruin yours ; and your observation is very just, " That silence there would have " been a kind of tacit retaliation ;" but your design of continuing upon the same foot of acquaintance with her as before, is carrying good nature too far

far, even to a degree of weakness, as it is unnecessarily exposing yourself to a repetition of the same injuries. A decent civility I would have you always maintain, when you meet her by accident; more than this, justice to yourself forbids. With a person who has once been found capable of so malicious an endeavour, any degree of intimacy would be blamable. Had you been unconcerned in the design, these had been your own sentiments on the subject, and ought now to be the guide of your conduct towards her. Situated and connected as we are here, virtue may be carried to an excess, that by its consequences becomes a vice; and this, the peculiar excellence of your own disposition, makes it very necessary

to guard you against: Forgiveness may be carried on to an apparent insensibility of the difference between right and wrong action; and then it becomes an encouragement to vice. We must expect to find a mixture of good and ill in every character we meet with here, as human nature can neither rise to perfection, or sink to a total depravity. To every individual of the species our regards ought to be proportioned to the degrees of intrinsic merit, as far as we are able to discover them. That sort of benevolence which is called humanity (from a general acknowledgment that it ought always to make a part of our composition) is due to every mortal; particular intimacies should never be formed but with the wise and

and virtuous; if drawn into any by a mistake in the character, they should be immediately retracted on a discovery of the error; and this may be done so decently as to avoid the censure of ill-nature, or ill-manners. You must now, my dear, pursue this method with regard to Lady L——, go no more to her house, and be always denied to her visits; but, if she speaks to you in any other place, return her civility with a reserve that, without affronting, may shew your intention: Such a conduct, believe me, is perfectly consistent with the most entire forgiveness of the injury intended you, and that forgiveness may be proved by the continuance of those good offices, which it is yet in your power

to render her, and which, I know,
you will still with equal pleasure
perform.

I have read the Portuguese history
you sent me, and think it answers
the character that was given you.
The marvellous is, no doubt, in
some places, carried to a degree of
extravagance, yet, upon the whole,
I am pleased with it ; and as the sen-
timents, in many parts, exactly cor-
respond with my own, I have with
the more pleasure undertaken the
task you have set me, to tranflate it.
I know not whether I am suffi-
ciently versed in the language to do
justice to the author, but shall be
able to convey his sentiments to you,
though the elegance of the expression
may

may sometimes be lost in the translation. I have yet gone through but a few pages, which are inclosed; send me your opinion of them; if, in spight of the disadvantageous dress the story receives from my hands, you are pleased with it, I shall go on with that pleasure through the whole, which it will ever give me to be able to contribute to your rational entertainments.

As I know you will be impatient to peruse the inclosed specimen of my performance, I shall detain you no longer than to subscribe myself, my dear Louisa, most affectionately,

Yours.

The

The adventures of Alphonso, after the destruction of Lisbon, related by himself, in a Letter to his brother, 1756.

YOU will, no doubt, my dear brother, be greatly surprised at receiving a letter from one, whom you have not heard of since the dreadful destruction of the city of Lisbon, where, before this terrible catastrophe, I was so happily situated.

From the account transmitted you by Don Gonfalez, you must have concluded, that I had shared the fate of my unfortunate family, who, together with my house, and the greatest part of my effects, were swallowed up ; a fate which, I believe, happened not to any other, the build-

buildings being either thrown down or consumed by fire. The astonishment with which you must hear that I am yet in the land of the living, will be increased by an account of the adventures I have met with since that dreadful day, wherein I, almost miraculously, escaped being involved in the general ruin. When the first shock of the earthquake began, I was about three leagues from home, on the road to a friend's house, with whom I had promised to pass a few days to make some curious experiments in natural philosophy; an entertainment to which my leisure hours were generally devoted. The unusually violent trembling of the earth under my mule's feet, alarmed my fears for that city, which contained

tained all that was dear and valuable to me: Without a moment's consideration I turned instantly back, and rode full speed towards Lisbon, under the utmost fear for the danger of my family; a very short time brought me within view of the town.—'Tis as impossible to describe to you the horrors of that sight, as it is the agitation of my mind in beholding it! In some places a thick smoke concealed every other object; through which the bursting flames successively issued, as from the mouth of a Vulcano: In others, whole streets of magnificent buildings were changed to mountains of rubbish, and though in that part of the city, through which I was to enter, no house had yet fallen,

fallen, the rocking edifices on either side threatened immediate destruction to all beneath. The cries of the inhabitants were drowned by a subterraneous noise, far exceeding the loudest thunder.

The horrors of this sight every moment encreased my apprehenfions for my family; and regardless of all the dangers surrounding myself, I leaped from my mule, whose terror had rendered her ungovernable, and pressed forward through the crowd that were flying into the adjacent fields for safety, 'till I had gained the terras at the lower end of my garden, from whence I had the transient satisfaction of seeing my house stand unhurt; but had not gone

twenty paces farther, before a more violent shock than any of the former threw me down with such force, that falling with my side against the pedestal of a statue, it was some minutes before I could stir: Incapable of moving from the spot, I beheld the statue nodding over my head, and every moment expected to be crushed by it's fall ; but my good genius prevailing at that instant, or rather the protecting hand of providence averting the danger, it fortunately fell in an opposite direction.

Whilst laying on the ground, the subterraneous noise sounded like the united groans of a whole army, which, added to the agitation of the earth,

earth, would have struck terror to the most courageous: However, summoning all my resolution to my aid, and imploring the assistance and protection of Heaven, I again rose upon my feet, but to take one last sad view of the falling repository of all that was dear to me: The motion, even from the foundation, was like the rolling of a large and deeply laden ship in a violent storm, which had not continued above half a minute before the earth opening, with a hideous noise, the whole edifice sunk, in an instant, entire; the ground closed over it, and a thick smoke remained for a few minutes in the place where it had stood. Conceive, if possible, some idea of an horror which baffles all description, and you

may

may form a judgment of what I felt! Uncertain on what to resolve, fixed by fear, and astonishment, to the spot from whence I beheld this fatal event, I stood a considerable time to wait the dissipation of the smoke, which was now the only object that presented itself; as that abated, some degree of resolution returned: Though I knew the greatest part of my fortune was inevitably lost, there was yet some hope that a wife, who was infinitely dear to me, and three children, whom I tenderly loved, might have escaped the ruin; animated with this possibility, I hastened forward, and mixing amongst the crowd of frightened inhabitants, vainly searched, and enquired through the whole blazing town; so universal was the conster-

sternation and terror, that scarce a person could give a rational answer; all were too much taken up by their own misfortunes to regard those of others, and I began to despair of receiving any intelligence, when father Rodolphus accosted me, with a composure truly worthy a Christian Philosopher. My son, said he, 'tis now the time to put in practice those virtuous principles in which you were educated; amidst this general desolation, it is the indispensable duty of every good man to set an example worthy imitation; arm yourself with resolution, to bear with becoming fortitude the ills which Heaven inflicts, and let a proper resignation to the will of God prove, that you have deserved the blessings he has so long

lent you.—Ah father, replied I, this introduction too well informs me of those truths your kind compassion fears to relate.—My beloved wife—my daughter and tender infants are involved in the ruins of my house, and I am the wretched survivor of all that was dear to me ! Your apprehensions, rejoined he, are just, the truly great and good Artimissa, whose virtue rendered her superior to the fear of Death, was apprehensive only for her children ; these she foresaw would be exposed to more certain danger, in being trusted to the care of affrighted servants to conduct them through a town in flames, where the falling houses every moment threatened inevitable destruction ; she chose rather to wait the event, and recom-

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mended

intended herself and them to the protection of the Almighty, sat down surrounded by her little ones with a firmness, and tranquillity scarcely to be equalled, and which could result only from conscious rectitude of heart, joined to an absolute resignation to the divine will: In this determination, with an unmoved composure of mind every moment expecting the period of mortality, and rejoicing that you were at a distance from, and ignorant of the dangers that surrounded us, I left her with reluctance, to give my assistance or advice to others, who stood more in need of it; but had not reached the end of the street, before a shock, more violent than any of the former, obliged me to catch hold of some pallisades

to support me from falling, when turning my eyes involuntarily towards her house, at that instant seeing the door burst open, and imagining she had changed her resolution, I was going back to aid her escape, but in a moment—spare, cried I, the sad repetition of my irreparable misfortune--these wretched eyes beheld the fatal catastrophe!--Why, just heaven, must life be to me prolonged beyond the period of every possible happiness? Why, dearest partner of my every joy, was it not permitted me to share your destiny?—But fate shall not long divide me from you, that death which only can restore my peace may here at once, without a crime, be found, and yonder falling edifice shall send my disembodied soul to seek

seek it's better half beyond the Grave
—Farewell, holy father, we meet no
more on earth, this hour is my last.
So saying, I endeavoured to make the
best of my way toward the church of
Notre Dame, which was shaking
from it's foundation with so much
violence, as to make me fear it would
become an heap of ruins before I
could get near enough to be buried
in them. Frantic as I was with dis-
pair, I had yet religion enough (as it
then appeared to me) to be desirous
of depositing my body in consecrated
ground, and therefore chose to meet
Death in this place rather than the
nearest that offered. The crowds,
that were flying from that destruc-
tion I courted, so much opposed my
passage that the good Rodolphus,

who notwithstanding his age and weakness, had with inexpressible labour and difficulty pursued my steps, came up to me, and laying hold on my arm,—What frenzy has possessed your soul (cried he with a commanding air and resolute tone, whilst in his eyes compassion, and anger seemed to dispute the preheminence) what madness urges you to war with Heaven? Shall man, offending man, dare murmur at his maker's will! Shall we, whose daily disobedience has long and loudly called for his avenging wrath, dare to resent those punishments his justice sends! Recall your reason, be grateful for the favours you have long enjoyed, and by a patient resignation make a tacit acknowledgment

of

of the donor's indisputable right to resume the blessings lent you.

Attempt not, replied I, in vain to persuade me to preserve a life which is now become hateful to me ;—I fly not in the face of Heaven—be all it's will obeyed—but let me seek a speedy grave ; the only means by which I now can join my dearest Artimissa, and the tender pledges of our mutual love : Her plaintive ghost now hovering o'er my head upbraids my too unkind delay.—Release my arm least I, forgetful of the reverence due to your age and function, break from you with too rude a force. Go then he cried, go impious suicide and meet the death you seek :---But know, your hopes again to find the lovely Artimissa

missa shall be in vain ; her pure unspotted soul has winged it's flight to those blessed realms, from whence thy guilt shall banish thee forever ; even now, perhaps, from yon bright arch she looks with horror on thy mad resolve, and grieves (if virtuous minds removed from hence at ought can grieve) to see thy headstrong folly on the point of rendering any future intercourse between you, to all eternity, impossible. Go then, go make the loss thou mournest irreparable !-- Convert this transient sorrow to unalterable misery, contend with power and goodness infinite, and draw down certain ruin on thyself ; go, wisely change what Heaven designed but for a short suspension of your mutual happiness,

pines, for an endless separation from
all you have ever held most dear.

With conscious shame I heard his
just rebuke; convicted of my guilt
confessed the fault, implored the holy
father's absolution; beg'd his direc-
tion, and promised to obey his dic-
tates. With tears of joy the good
Rodolphus welcomed my returning
reason, and offered every consolation
Religion could afford: My mind grown
calmer owned the duty of submission,
and endeavoured to practice it. Though
grief unutterable unsubdued, still
urged me to reject the force of rea-
son, which scarce had power to re-
strain my sorrow within the bounds
of a submissive silence: The pious
priest with pity saw the painful com-
bat

bat.---Come my son, said he, let us discharge the duty of Christians, by lending all the assistance in our power to our fellow sufferers; this is a time for action, we misemploy it in conversing;---Your choice of Death must render you fearless of danger, my duty bids me disregard it; and though my feeble arm, enervated by age, can be of little use, my exhortations to the dying, and my calmer council to those whom fear renders inactive, and incapable of judging, may yet be serviceable. --- Let us therefore bend our steps where the greatest danger requires the most speedy assistance.---Lend your aid in helping to convey the sick, the weak, the infant and the aged, to a place of safety, with their least cumbersome and

and most valuable effects : If during this employment some rocking edifice should bury you beneath it's ruins, you will meet Death nobly, and the last act of piety ensure to you a glorious immortality. This motive had all the weight with me he wished to give it, a dawning hope reanimated my breast, half my sorrows seemed dispersed, and I followed him with an alacrity that in such a situation is scarcely conceiveable.

L E T-

LETTER III.

To Mr. —,

SIR,

AS a fortnight has elapsed since you left town, without my hearing any thing from you, I begin to be apprehensive that you have forgot your promise; and I expect too much pleasure and improvement from your correspondence not to remind you of the performance.

Though

Though I am not convinced by your arguments, I must do you the justice to acknowledge that you have supported your opinion with more art and ingenuity than any body I have met with on that side of the question. But nevertheless, all that has been said, either by yourself, or your great patron Mr. Lock, has not yet convinced me that the mind owes all her knowledge to ideas received from material objects, and conveyed by the organs of sense ; this, I think, is making the superior part of our composition depend wholly for its advantages, and improvements, on the inferior. On such a supposition the body is so far from being a clog on the mental powers, that the latter are assisted and benefited by the union.

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Is there a thinking man whose experience does not prove this to be false? Have not the wisest men, in all ages, lamented the impossibility of exceeding the bounds which confine the human capacity, and sensibly felt the powers of the mind fettered by the shackles of mortality? Have you not found, when thinking closely on any very abstruse subject, a latent power in your mind, of expanding itself beyond the narrow limits which circumscribe the knowledge of man, and evidently felt the mental powers painfully restrained by the union of matter? You are too ingenuous, I dare say, to deny a truth, however strongly it may make against your fide of the question; and cannot surely but often have experienced

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the fact: Instances of such a nature have happened so frequently to myself, as to amount nearly to a demonstration, that the ætherial something which animates this clod, is by that as much restrained from exerting its native powers, as a man who peeps through the grates of a prison is confined by the bars that intercept his passage; the analogy might be carried on, and the small distance between those bars not very improperly compared to the organs of sense, through which, just what is passing in a particular district only can be discovered; to all beyond, the impenetrable walls intercept the view. In either case, remove the obstruction, and how great the advantages! How increased

increased the opportunities of knowledge !

Why in the one shall we deny the natural and inherent powers more than in the other, when it is plain the exertion of them is equally restrained in both?

I long much to hear what you have farther to urge in behalf of a system that, I confess, I should be sorry to see so well supported as to convince me of its certainty.---I see you ready to answer, that in the search of truth we ought to throw away all prejudice, and be absolutely indifferent on which side it is found.---True; but if our inclination to either is not permitted to bias the judgment, we may be

be equally open to conviction which is the only necessary point; thus you shall ever find me; and should your arguments prove stronger than my objections, I shall readily submit, though such a change of opinion will be a little mortifying, as you know it must considerably lessen my own consequence, by lowering the standard of human nature in general.--- Be that as it may, I am proof against all the consequences, and at present chiefly occupied by the desire of hearing soon from you, do not in this disappoint my expectation, and you will much oblige,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

*The ANSWER.**To Mrs. P——.*

MADAM,

BEFORE I received the letter you have honoured me with, the inclosed was wrote and sealed : by that you will be convinced that I was not so blind to my own advantage, as to neglect the opportunity of improvement, which, by the correspondence you have promised to favour me with, I may have the happiness of enjoying. If my arguments have any weight with you, it will

will sufficiently authenticate them to myself, and confirm my opinion; if not, I shall have the good fortune to be better instructed by a person whose judgment I have the highest opinion of, and to whom I shall always, with the greatest truth, subscribe myself, a much obliged and

obedient humble servant, &c.

[Inclosed in the above.]

MADAM,

IN a late conversation which you was pleased to allow me to share, we had some dispute concerning the origin of the powers of the mind;

on which you spoke with that liveliness peculiar to your sex, but with that perspicuity and judgment peculiar only to yourself: As I took the opposite side of the argument, being prejudiced perhaps in the opposite doctrine, so, till I am more thoroughly convinced, I am ready to defend it; and, as it is a point of consequence in metaphysics, I am not willing to lose this opportunity of having my notions on this subject cleared up satisfactorily; which must be, whether I bear off the laurel, or lay it at your feet; for, if the first, I am certain my arguments have been seriously weighed by an impartial and judicious critic; one who obeys nature, not the pedantic laws of system and schools; and, consequently, the

appro-

approbation of them renders me certain for the future: If the last, I shall have an opportunity of considering it in an unprejudiced light, and of having it conveyed to me with the additional advantage of grace and decoration. This, Madam, I hope will be some excuse for my taking this liberty. Some old Greek, I forget who, says: " In search of knowledge you may break through decorum and false pomp."

The point in dispute is, whether the mind is entirely nurtured by material ideas, (I do not say formed) or whether it has in itself, independent of matter, any store of notions or predispositions:—Of the first opinion I have declared myself.

I may proceed to prove my opinion two ways, either first, by beginning with the most complex and abstracted powers of the mind, and tracing them down to simple material ideas ; or, secondly, by beginning with simple ideas, and gradually forming the most complex powers of the mind. The first, the analytical method supposes many things known, which ought not to be supposed, and even, with such supposition is most difficult. The last supposes nothing known, and tho' difficult, is, I think, preferable to the other. That therefore you must allow me to follow.

First then, let a body be formed fitted for animal life, let it be of the most

most simple structure, and have the fewest organs that it possibly can, such a one is the Oyster ; all that is necessary for it, is food.—Food gives it a sense of fullness and pleasure—Hunger, emptiness and pain. Here are all the sensations this animal feels, and you see it only capable of pleasure and pain, which are the two most simple affections.

Now I chose this almost inorganized animal to express my first notions of the simple powers of the mind : Let us step forward immediately to mankind, and first consider the wild untaught savage : Let us first recollect the senses, and the power of the senses. Suppose him free from companions, placed in a

wild country : Light, under all its various modifications, strikes his eye : Sound, under all the vast variety of vibrations, affects his ear ; and, from the wonderful texture and configuration of the different organs of sense, a vast diversity of ideas strike him. From the different mode in which these act on the senses, he finds some agreeable, and some the reverse : Some give pleasure, and some give pain : What do we mean by pleasure ? A certain placid delightful sensation that makes us devoid of fear : What by pain ? the contrary : Suppose now the mind possesses these two notions of pain and pleasure : Next let us consider the variety and division of each. From a diversified view of figures, before the mind is aware,

aware, a notion of beauty arises, for I believe, that independant of what we call fancy or taste, there is a certain arrangement of form, that constitutes true beauty: From hearkening to sounds a notion of harmony is formed; for as of beauty, so of harmony.—A certain symmetry and regularity of parts constitute the former; a certain correspondency or union of sounds produce the latter.—This may be carried on throughout, and with regard to all the other senses will hold good. All this time you will say, whence comes the mind to judge of these? I answer, that I believe the mind, or soul, has in itself certain powers that form it, and that the power of comparision is the chief, but as no comparision can be made with-

without subjects, so the mind could have no exertion without material ideas. The history of the creation says, that God breathed into the animal he had made, the breath of life, by this I understand, that he infused an immaterial principle, that was to be brought into action by matter: As fire, according to some philosophers, has no action without other matter, so, as I said before, without material ideas the mind has no action.

From the impressions of harmony, beauty, &c. received, retained, and applied; from the knowledge of good and evil, pleasure and pain (all first received from material objects, but now remaining conceived and impressed by,

by, or on an immaterial principle) we have notions formed, abstracted Ideas, and such may we now apply variously to the actions of life. Now observe, that prudence and judgment are not powers of the mind originally placed there, but gradually formed or produced. What is judgment? A just conclusion from facts. What is prudence? the offspring of judgment, or a wise plan of conduct formed thereon. Can a judgment be formed without foregoing facts? Facts at first are unpremeditated, and by their consequences alone determined good or bad. From judgments formed from unpremeditated actions, prudence is then produced.

Judg-

Judgment is not then instinctive in the mind, and we vain boasters, who look upon ourselves as much superior to other creatures, have only this superior knowledge from superior memory and communication of notions. The wild savage is little better than the brute ; his judgment in itself is trifling, his prudence less, he is supported by appetites, and only directed by them.

From material ideas then we have acquired a sense of pain and pleasure ; from the same source we have obtained a knowledge of harmony, beauty, and true flavor ; and lastly, drawn certain abstracted notions of them, which we apply to different abstracted subjects. From the consequences of unpre-

unpremeditated actions, dictated by passion, sensation, or chance, certain effects have been produced; which collected, have, as they relate to happiness or misery, been retained, and prudence has been formed.

Here I might conclude, but before I do so, I shall endeavour to bring some illustrations of this opinion.

First, Was it possible (but it is not) to form a man absolutely without the inlets to material ideas, would that man have any ideas at all? I believe not. And my reason for this opinion is drawn from lesser instances of the same kind. I know a Gentleman who is deaf, and was

conse-

consequently dumb, until eleven years of age, when he was taught to understand by signs, and to speak; since which time he has made a vast proficiency in the sciences; being now an admirable mathematician, and a man of honor, probity, and virtue. When he speaks of himself he says, that before the time he began to learn, he knew little or nothing, that he looks upon that state as a pre-existence, but has no notion of its length; he thinks he lived a thousand thousand years ago, as he expresses it; and to shew that natural judgment is trifling, this Gentleman, tho' a man of rank, who consequently was properly attended to, was so awkward and so irregular in his imitations, that he has scarcely yet learned to walk: Which proves that

that unpremeditated actions which flow not from premeditated judgment, but from sense, passion, or chance, by their effects produce prudence. For when this Gentleman began to understand the admonitions and instructions of his friends, his mental powers increased amazingly.

As soon as we have reached such a cultivated state of man, that a vast variety of consequences are known, and what we call wisdom, judgment, reason, produced, we find it equally difficult to trace the origin of detached opinions concerning fellowships, friendships, the origin of the fine sensations, generosity, refinement of sentiment, taste, and so forth; I say equally difficult, as it would

would be from a mixture of every colour, and shade of colour together, to detect the particles, and trace the production of every new cast. However, to shew you that some of even the most abstracted operations, or determinations of the mind, may, from the complexity, be traced to simple ideas, I will select friendship.—What is friendship? A certain tie between individuals that obliges them to serve each other as far as possible: Whence arises it? Either from simularity of dispositions, or an approbation or admiration of the dispositions of each other. What are these dispositions? Certain determinations to do good or harm. What is good? Whatever tends to the advantage of mankind.

In

In what consists the advantage of mankind? In supporting the necessities, elegancies, harmony, and happiness of mankind. The necessities of life are food and raiment; these dictated by want, known by sensation, remedied by material powers, and material qualities. So might we proceed till we had traced back the whole to the same source.

Least I should tire your patience, and be thought to impose on good-nature, I must here stop, begging that you will not imagine that this letter is thought properly disposed, as I have only had time to drop my arguments as they occurred, and not to place them in so convincing a light as perhaps they might have been;

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being obliged to write as fast as possible, and have now hardly time before the post goes out, to say, that with the lowest submission to your opinion,

I am,

MADAM,

Your most obedient

humble servant.



L E T-

LETTER V.

To Mrs. G—.

IT gives me infinite pleasure, my dear Madam, to find you enter so perfectly into the character of my friend, by which alone a true judgment can be formed of her conduct. Your observation is very just with regard to the singularity of her disposition ; 'tis indeed that singularity only which makes it blamable, for it must undoubtedly be allowed, that could the tender and affectionate friendship, for which her heart is so peculiarly formed, subsist, unmixed with any degree of passion, be-

tween young persons of different sexes, it would necessarily raise the human nature much nearer to perfection, by divesting it of those strong incitements which daily lead, I had almost said impel, the greatest part of mankind to actions that their cooler judgment severely censures, and which can never be seriously reflected on, without the painful sensation which is inseparably connected with a disapprobation of our own conduct.

But admitting this pretty theoretical system unexceptionable in itself, the experience of all ages having proved the difficulty of reducing it to practice so great, as to amount almost to an impossibility, no sensible person can be justified in the eager

eager pursuit of a phantome that most probably will forever elude their embrace.

In excuse for Mrs. P——, however, it may with truth be urged, that the certain power she felt in herself of practising her favourite system in its fullest extent of affectionate tenderness to either sex indiscriminately, (not only without forming the most transient wish to exceed the bounds it prescribed, but even without considering whether the minds to which she was warmly attached, inhabited either male or female forms) must in some measure justify an opinion that these sentiments could not be peculiar to herself; and, consequently, that other

persons might be found of the same turn, and capable of an equal degree of refinement; the behaviour of one of the most sensible and polite of her admirers, served to confirm this opinion, who, convinced of the sincerity of her declarations, by the constant openness of her conduct, in which there was not the least degree of affectation, or reserve, would not hazard the abatement of the tender affection she frankly owned for him, by acknowledging the least mixture of passion, in the friendship he professed for her—but of this hereafter.

, Every part of her behaviour was diametrically opposite to those persons, who, under the cloak of what they call platonic love, scruple not to

to indulge every liberty, that only excepted, which destroys the system; but which too frequently follows in its turn without any such original intention.

It was an invariable rule with her never to permit any freedoms; and I am very certain that no man ever received a greater favour from her than the permission to kiss her hand, till she had fixed on the person on whom she resolved to bestow it; exclusive of civil salutes in company, or in the presence of her parents, by persons authorised by them to pay their addresses to her: This probably might be the result of a peculiar kind of pride imbibed from the stile of the ancient romances; all of

F 4 which,

which, voluminous as they are, she had read before the age of fifteen. Notwithstanding these have been so deservedly condemned, they are certainly less pernicious than the modern novels, as the perfect purity of sentiment they inspire, in some measure compensates for the romantic notions at the same time conveyed ; the case is so evidently different in the latter species of writing, that 'tis needless to pursue the comparison ; but happy would it be for succeeding generations, if all of both kinds were burnt.

Gay and lively, or rather giddy, as her turn naturally was, no person could be more steady and resolute
on

on occasions wherein she thought it necessary to be so.

I remember to have heard her father remark, that when extremely young, if under the fear of punishment, she would reason with so much gravity and justice to prove to him, that the intended correction was become unnecessary by her thorough sensibility of the fault, and resolution of amendment, (the only end he could propose by it) that she seldom failed to succeed, after being kept some time in suspense, to continue a conversation, that, while it exercised her reason, discovered the strength of it ; for the danger was no sooner over, than she became again the perfect child ; and, to use his

own

own expression, seemed in an instant to have lost more than twenty years growth of understanding.

Her fortune, her appearance, and the capacity of rendering herself equally agreeable to the grave, or gay, gave her a great number of admirers: Those who appeared to be seriously attached to her she never trifled with, by giving any encouragement to a passion that could only be productive of uneasiness to themselves; the very few whose understanding and behaviour rendered their conversation perfectly agreeable to her, after having dismissed as lovers, she endeavoured to retain as friends, and to form with them that intimate, tender, mental connection, which

which her lively imagination had painted as the summit of human felicity. Repeated disappointments in this expectation were far from inducing her to relinquish the attempt; instead of assigning the natural and obvious cause, she imputed every disappointment only to her having formed too high an opinion of the person; and no longer esteemed, or wished to contract a friendship with any man whom she found incapable of that refined affection with which she had endeavoured to inspire him; but still cherished the hope of meeting with some minds exactly corresponding with her own, whose society would afford her that perfect happiness she had formed so high an idea of.

It

It may reasonably be thought that this romantic pursuit must, at her age, have exposed her to the greatest dangers ; but against these her natural disposition was the strongest guard ; and, young as she then was, her observation was too accurate to run even a hazard of that kind :— She never contracted any intimacy with libertines.—Educated in the most strictly virtuous principles herself, she looked on those as essential in a friend, and could never allow any other advantages to compensate for a deficiency herein ; where a good heart appeared to be wanting, the most brilliant qualities never attracted her regard.

Her

Her acquaintance were very numerous, but those whom she esteemed, or even liked, were very few; yet, unhappily, that love of admiration, which has already been remarked as the ruling passion, inclined her to retain, by delusive hopes, every insignificant coxcomb who was proud of being ranked amongst the number of those distinguished by the most trifling of her favours. The frequent admonitions of a very sensible and sagacious friend, whose long experience, and thorough knowledge of the world, perfectly qualified him for an able monitor, were ineffectual, tho' he represented, in the strongest terms, the ill consequences that must unavoidably attend so imprudent a conduct; to the truth of these

these remonstrances her reason assented ; but, vanity prevailing over her better judgment, there was no persuading her to renounce the pleasure of being followed by a train of admirers, and laughing at the envy excited by the despotic power she exercised over them, regardless of the pernicious effects which envy seldom fails to produce.

If any excuse can be allowed for the indulging a disposition to be pleased with raising painful sensations in the breast of those who cannot, without repining, see any superior advantages enjoyed by another, it can only be when those sensations are produced by imaginary advantages, and the vain desire of professing

setting things in themselves not in the least essential to the comforts, or conveniences of life, and even then, the thoughtless gaiety of youth must be taken into the account by way of extenuation.

Very different is that disposition which, to the end of life, seems to value the goods of fortune principally on account of the opportunities they afford for this kind of mean, I had almost said malicious, triumph over their fellow creatures; some of whom, perhaps with a much superior degree of intrinsic merit, sustain innumerable inconveniences from the unequal distribution of riches. Certain it is, that many indulge this sort of foolish vanity to a degree of ill-nature

ill-nature that they are not themselves at all sensible of; a striking instance of it in Lady F—— this morning has led me into a train of melancholy reflections on the imperfections of the human mind: She called on me before ten, and, in answer to the surprise I expressed to see her abroad so early, said, she had risen three hours before her usual time to make the most of so fine a day.—Fine! said I, with astonishment, what can be more disagreeable than snow!—nothing but absolute necessity would carry me out in such weather, was it only in compassion to the servants and horses.— Servants and horses! replied the good Lady, repeating my words ironically — What an antiquated set of notions

tions you philosophical people adopt ; who else would have thought of studying the *convenience* of creatures who are kept merely for *our own* ? 'Tis pity that a woman of your sense should have so little spirit—Now 'tis the greatest pleasure in the world to me, tho' I am almost starved with cold, to rattle about the streets in my chariot, and mortify the poor devils who are obliged to wade on foot thro' the snow, and seem every minute ready to tumble with their noses against a post ; I shall drive half over the town this morning to divert myself with the odd figures, and get home but just in time to be dressed by dinner.—Where would be the charms of rank and fortune, if they

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did not make one the object of envy to those who have them not ! Believe me, my dear Madam, said I, they can never be productive of real happiness to the possessor, but when employed to improve the minds, and alleviate the pains of the inferior class of mankind, both by laudable examples, and pecuniary benefits ; and I am surprised that you, who are naturally of so compassionate a disposition, should delight in——A truce with this moralizing strain, replied Lady F—— ; the poor creatures who carry burthens are the only objects of compassion ; those I pity, but divert myself with the embarrassment of the rest, and enjoy every face of envy that passes me——I knew all you would

would say, but can't stay to hear it now — Good Morrow — How much pleasure you lose by your grave reflections! — Then running down stairs, without giving me time to reply, stepped into her chariot and drove off.

I have given you this short conversation in her own words, because no other would so well convey the idea which must be annexed to them. What a strange species of amusement is this! The impression which the recital makes on your mind will, I dare say, be similar to that left by the incident on mine. Lady F — possesses a thousand good qualities, for which I love her,

but vanity and false pride cast so dark a shade over the whole, as totally to obscure the native brightness of her character. —— Is it possible to see the favours of heaven so perverted without regret and real concern? In relieving the wants of the indigent she is liberal to profusion; pain, sickness, or extreme poverty, never sue in vain for her assistance; I am convinced this does not proceed from ostentation; yet the general tenor of her conduct has occasioned its being wholly imputed to this motive; by which the benefit of so laudable an example is intirely lost.

How melancholy a reflection it is
that people of good understandings,
who

who seem to judge rationally in every thing else, should often be so ridiculously vain of accidental advantages, which the next moment may put a final period to: In the instant of dissolution what distinction remains between the monarch and the peasant, that only excepted which superior virtue gives? and when this happens on the side of the latter, what a mortifying change of situation must ensue! wherein perhaps the continuance of that false pride, which can no longer be gratified, may give more poignant anguish than any positive punishment could inflict.—Add to this, the consciousness of having totally neglected those mental improvements, which rank and fortune afford the means

of making in the highest degree; with the shame that, to such dispositions, must necessarily result from appearing, in every sense, below those beings, that were so late beheld with a supercilious contempt, and say, if a state of more excruciating torment can be conceived.

Those who pretend to laugh at the sacred writings as unphilosophical, for threatening departed spirits with the punishment of corporeal fire, may one day own the metaphor was too weak to express the grief, despair, and anguish, arising from the sad reflection, that the day is spent, the hour for ever lost, that, well employed, might have secured eternal honour, and everlasting happiness !

pines! These, my dear Madam, are in store for you, but allow me to hope, that the perfect reward of your virtue may be deferred, till a mortal vehicle no longer confines the mind of your

Affectionate, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

To Miss Louisa ——.

THE benevolence of your own heart, my dear Louisa, is most strongly characterised in the concern you express for the account that has been transmitted to you of poor Miss Harriot, with whom you had so very slight an acquaintance ; I wish it was in my power to give you the pleasure of contradicting the reports you have heard with so much concern, but certain it is, that she left her father's house above three months ago ; her absence was concealed, as long as possible, in hopes of her return ;

turn ; hitherto they have not been able to discover what is become of her ; the Family, I believe, have no doubt that Mr. ——— has persuaded her to this elopement, and provided a secret place for her residence, but this it is not thought proper to tax him with upon a bare presumption, and no proof of it can yet be obtained. The girl is greatly to be pitied, who is much less to blame than her parents, they could not be blind to Harriot's growing affection for Mr. ———, and yet were continually inviting him to their house, as if to give them every possible opportunity of being together ; their increasing attachment was observed by every body, and gave rise to reports much to her disadvantage.

An

An intimate friend to the family took an opportunity of telling the old Lady, in the gentlest terms, how much her daughter's character suffered in the world by so particular an intimacy with a man of a general bad character, who was not unmarried by the separation from his wife, and, consequently, could not even make a pretence of honourable Addresses, hinting, in the most tender manner, the real danger to which the girl must be exposed by the continuance of so improper an intimacy.

Instead of receiving this information in the grateful manner it deserved, both the mother and father took fire at the supposed injury to their

their daughter's reputation, and treated their prudent friend as the author and propagator of a scandalous report. They are now too late become sensible of their error, and, I believe, truly grieved at the consequences ; were they the only sufferers, I should not feel much for them ; their pride towards their equals, and insolence to their inferiors, well deserve the severest mortification. This has been a dreadful one, they seem much humbled by it ; and, as it always happens to persons whose haughty deportment has made innumerable enemies, every body seems more ready to rejoice at, than compassionate their misfortune.

Nothing certainly is more impolitic than an imperious behaviour, which
is

is sure to entail the hatred of all who have been affronted by it, and that must be every one on whom it has been practised. Nothing is more unbecoming, or distasteful, than that sort of false pride, which results from the accidental superiority of rank, or fortune: Seldom is this found united with any valuable qualities of the mind, but was it blended with innumerable virtues, 'twould so obscure their lustre, that not one in a thousand would have penetration enough to discover their existence; instead of procuring respect and deference, it usually disappoints its own intention, by raising a dislike that gladly seizes every opportunity of giving mortification.—I doubt the family in question will daily experience the truth

truth of this observation, and, very probably, on this account be obliged to quit a country where their behaviour has rendered them perfectly disagreeable. — You will grieve for poor Harriot, who has, I fear, fallen a sacrifice to the pride, and imprudence of her parents; she is by far the most sensible and best tempered of the family; and those who seem pleased with their mortification, lament her misfortune, and wish either of the other sisters had been the victim, whom not a creature would have pitied. I will inform you the moment we have any news of her, but fear that will not be of a kind to lessen our apprehensions.

Happy,

Happy, my dear Louisa, have you been in the attentive care of a sensible, virtuous, and prudent mother, who watched your growing inclinations; and, with an art almost peculiar to herself, insensibly gave them a proper direction; to this you are indebted for that excellent turn of mind which has effectually secured you from all the follies that too often, not only render young ladies the object of ridicule, but expose them to the hazard of falling an easy prey to those who have art enough to attack the weak side.

It is matter of astonishment to me, that many wise men should have held it as a maxim, that all improvement of the minds of women was disad-

disadvantageous to them. My Lord L_____, as clever a man as any the age he lived in produced, educated four daughters upon this principle, in almost total ignorance, nor would even suffer them to learn to write.--- Three of them were married young, made very insignificant and extravagant wives, had each a numerous family, amongst whom, not one made a tolerable figure in the world,

The first six years of a child's life ought to be wholly under the direction of its mother ; experience will prove that the impressions made during that period are of immense consequence through all future life ; ought she then not to be properly qualified to discharge an office of such impor-

importance? and how is that possible if her own mind is wholly uninstructed? It will not be long, I find, my dear Louisa, before you enter into an engagement that may soon make this a part of your duty, whenever that happens, I have no doubt but you will act in this with the same propriety you have done on all other occasions.

As you seem so much pleased with my translation I shall proceed with alacrity; and, from time to time, inclose as many pages as the size of a letter will properly carry. I had rather receive your remarks on the story than give you mine; should we happen to differ in opinion, you shall then always have my sentiments, and

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and reasons for the dissent; but it will give me more pleasure to hear yours first. Adieu, my dear; that your wisdom and happiness may increase with your years, is the ardent wish of

Yours, &c.

The adventures of ALPHONSO continued.

’T IS impossible to describe to you the unruffled composure, and undisturbed presence of mind, with which this eminently good man gave general directions ; he calmly heard the confession of the dying, recommended them to Heaven by a few short ejaculations, and gave them his absolution to chear their last moments ; the falling ruins frequently presented opportunities of this sort. The monks of his own convent, who were flying from the dangers of the trembling town, he restrained by his autho-

authority, and obliged them not only to discharge the duties of their office to the wounded, and the dying, but to lend their assisting hand in every capacity to the distressed inhabitants ; while, in spight of age and weakness, he performed wonders himself ; and, animated by an uncommon benevolence, flew from place to place, with all the fire of youth, to see his orders obeyed ; often seizing with his own arm those miscreants, who, taking advantage of the general confusion, were attempting to plunder the sufferers of what little had escaped the fury of the flames, and putting them under a proper guard, till they could receive their deserved punishment :—A more than mortal energy seemed to accompany both his words

and actions.—Influenced by his persuasive eloquence, and encouraged by his laudable example, many of the men, whose reason seemed to have been supplanted by terror, and were crowding almost over the backs of each other to fly, they scarce knew whether, returned with great composure to the places of danger, and calmly took the most prudent measures to preserve all that might be saved from the increasing destruction.

It was not till the earthquake had intirely ceased that the good father retired to rest: I had accompanied him through every danger and fatigue, and, at his request, went with him to a tent, he had caused to be pitched

pitched in a field, at some distance from the town. My admiration of him, together with the hurry I had been in to alleviate, in some measure, the distresses of others, for a while seemed to have suspended the thought of my own misfortune ; but soon as this employment ceased, a thousand distracting reflections filled my breast with inexpressible anguish. No hope remained of that death I had flattered myself with meeting amidst the dangers that late surrounded me, and all the horrors of my present forlorn state returned to my tortured imagination with accumulated strength.

I felt my loss with the quickest sensibility, but with more resignation

and composure, than at first ; the frantic impatience, which then urged me to the most desperate resolutions, was now subsided into a settled melancholy, that all the good man's endeavours could not dissipate. He took a slight refreshment, obliged me reluctantly to partake of it, and, after offering up thanks to heaven for suspending its deserved wrath before we were all consumed, and imploring protection for those who still remained, and a period to the calamities of the city, laid him down to rest on a couch ; when the sweetest slumber instantly closed his eyes. I had, at his desire, also reclined myself on one prepared for me (who only remained in the tent with him) but was too much oppressed with sor-

now to hope the relief of sleep, and now gave a loose to unbounded grief. A thousand times I invoked my lost Artimissa, and the dear pledges of our mutual love, accused myself as the author of my own misfortunes for being absent at the time:—Fool that I was, said I, to leave them at Lisbon! had I taken them with me they had escaped the danger, or had I also been there, I might have saved them from it! Instead of endeavouring to bring all those considerations to my mind, that might alleviate my affliction, my restless imagination was searching for every possible supposition to increase it: The greatest part of the night was thus spent in lamentations, and sometimes a copious flow of bursting tears gave

vent to my anguish—till nature, unable to sustain the continued fatigue both of mind and body, at length sunk to repose.

Scarce were my eyelids sealed in sleep, when the lovely Artimissa appeared to my view, more fair than in the early bloom of youth and beauty; in her arms she held my youngest boy; my daughter led the eldest, who hung upon his mother's robe, that shone resplendent as the noon-day sun, and with equal splendor dazzled the aching sight.—Alphonso, said she, with a voice wherein majesty and tenderness were blended, my dear Alphonso, weep not for those whom Heaven has highly favoured, by so early a permission

mission to exchange a state of being incident to all the various miseries of mortality, for one of inexpressible, and unalterable happiness. Whilst upon earth, I thought myself supremely blessed by your affection, and was really as much so, both in that, and the constant endeavour to discharge all the duties of the station Heaven had placed me in, as, whilst united to the body, I was capable of being; but mortals can have no conception of the felicity they may one day arrive at, and which the happy spirits, free'd from all the incumbrances of matter, here enjoy: To quit this for the most eligible and delightful state in your world, would be torment to us beyond expression; rather, therefore, ought you to

to rejoice at my removal, than mourn your loss : All our virtuous affections accompany us hither, and you are still as dear to me as ever, but I am now incapable of grief even at our separation, and look forward with pleasure to our re-union, when you shall with us partake our ceaseless enjoyments. We measure not time by your calculation, what you look upon to be placed at a great distance, by many intervening years, to us appears as almost present. Part of our happiness consists in seeing all things as they really are, which affords an evident conviction that all the dispensations of our benevolent Creator are guided by unerring wisdom, and perfect goodness ; nor could be altered, in any instance, without

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a manifest disadvantage. Men, in other respects wise, often prove the weakness of human judgment, by ardently desiring those things that, if granted, would be productive of the greatest misfortunes to them; but after being free'd from the shackles of mortality, an increased knowledge renders it impossible for us to form a wish, that any thing should have been ordered otherwise than it is: You now look upon yourself as the most unfortunate of mankind, and are ready to tax Heaven with cruelty, that has in one fatal moment deprived you of a most hopeful offspring, together with a wife so tenderly beloved; but believe me, the time will come, when, for reasons that I am not now permitted to reveal, you shall

grate-

gratefully acknowledge the kindness of even this apparently grievous dispensation.—You know, my dear Alphonso, I never have deceived you, trust therefore now my word, and cease to lament what I tell you is far from being an evil either to you, or me; resume your wonted cheerfulness, and wait with patience for that blessed hour, that shall again unite us to each other, in a state of unalterable bliss:—I leave you now, continued she, to the care of this benevolent attendant on the human race (pointing to a beautiful youth whom I had not before observed to be standing at my elbow) his conversation will entertain, and his instructions improve your mind; attend to his admonitions, and you will never err.

As

As she spoke these words she waved her hand as bidding me farewell, and turned to leave me—Oh stay, I cried, a moment stay, to give one last embrace, and eagerly stretching out my arms to catch the fleeting shadow, broke through the silken bonds of sleep, and in a moment lost the pleasing vision.

The noise I made disturbed the good Rodolphus, who hastily starting from his couch demanded the cause, which I recounted exactly to him; and, whilst repeating it, felt the truth of all my Artimissa had seemed to say, whose words filled my mind with perfect tranquillity, and undisturbed composure. Convinced, said I, that she has made so advantageous a change,

a change, I will no longer mourn her removal from me, but faithfully obey her injunction, and wait with patience, that happy hour when I shall be made partaker of her perfect felicity.

The pious Father, truly rejoicing at the change in my disposition, said all that wisdom and goodness could suggest to confirm my resolution, which he found so steady as to remove all apprehensions of my committing any act of extravagance, and therefore made no scruple of leaving me alone while he went to visit those whose greater impatience under their losses more immediately required his care. As there was no probability of his returning in a considerable time, I also

I also went out of the tent to view the ruins of our late flourishing city.—Never was there a more melancholy prospect, I shuddered at the sight of the havock, which a few hours had made, and seemed now to feel more for the misfortunes of others than my own; yet my feet insensibly led me to the place where I once boasted the possession of all the temporal blessings, that could constitute the happiness of man: Whilst viewing this spot with still greater attention than the rest, I could not help reflecting on the mighty difference a few days had made in my situation.—That rising sun, said I, has but thrice sunk beneath the horizon, since, in this place, it beheld me the happiest of mortals, blessed with a

virtuous wife, a happy offspring, and an ample fortune, but now, forlorn I stand of all those joys bereft.—

Scarce had these words passed my lips e'er I repented the expression, and thought the beauteous youth, whose admonitions Artimissa had bid me attend to, frowned at my folly: This led me again to ruminate on the vision of the night; I was at a loss to guess what was meant by my being left to the care of this benevolent being, and seemed more to lament the uncertainty of his presence, whose dictates my heart seemed thoroughly disposed to obey, than all the distresses that had before befallen me. Whilst musing on this subject, I accidentally cast my eye on a chasm in the earth, which seemed about

about ten paces from where the door of my late house had been.—Curiosity led me to the edge of it, when I observed that the uneven breaks of the ground formed a kind of steps, by which a man might easily descend ; it instantly occurred to me that perhaps the house, in sinking together, might have been preserved intire, and, by this chasm in the earth, there was a possibility of entering it, by which means, at least, great part of my effects could be recovered, and the funeral obsequies paid to my family.

LETTER. VII.

To Mr. B——.



SIR,

NOT being as yet convinced by what you have said*, you must permit me to offer a few objections to your Hypothesis, which, however weak they may be in themselves, will, I hope, from your candor meet with a favourable construction, and be imputed rather to a laudable desire of being better instructed, than to the vanity of supposing myself able to confute your arguments.

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* See Letter IV. page 50.

The mind's near alliance to, and close connection with matter, in its present state of union with the body, makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to prove to a demonstration its capacity of forming any ideas independant of matter, yet absolutely to deny such a capacity, seems but little more reasonable than to say, that a man chained to the ground had not in himself the power of motion, because the exertion of that power was by such confinement rendered impossible.

Whatever ideas the mind may be conscious of, it has no way at present of communicating them to another but by the organs of sense, and by such sounds as have determinate

significations, and are mutually understood; from hence it follows, that a savage may to us appear totally ignorant, and unconscious of any ideas more than what are common to the brute creation, merely because he has no way of intelligibly expressing those perceptions, which it is very possible he may notwithstanding be conscious of. Two men of great capacity and lively genius, if wholly unacquainted with each other's language, will, from that sole cause, each appear to the other stupid and insensible. May not this, in some measure, account for the seeming insensibility of the gentleman you mention, before he had learned the use of language? And may not his present manner of expressing himself

himself be owing to the little knowledge he has yet acquired of articulate sounds?

To suppose a rational mind united to a body unsupplied with any organs of sense, is only supposing the soul in the same confined state that the body would be if a man was bound hand and foot, and locked up in a close chest; in both cases all exertion of any possessed powers are, for a time, totally restrained; but would you alledge that as a proof of their not being given in the one case more than in the other?

That the mind has a capacity of forming ideas, that it never could receive from matter by the organs of sense, I believe the experience of

every thinking man will convince him of. — To give a few instances. Is there any man who knows not the meaning of the word time, and has not a determinate idea affixed to that term? yet time is not material, and consequently, not the object of sense. The same in part may be said of space. Again, suppose you have a friend that possesses all the valuable qualifications that can adorn the human mind, whose person is unfortunately so deformed, as to excite, at first view, a kind of abhorrence; will you not feel an affection as well as esteem for such a friend? What is it then that you love in him? Not his person, which is the object of dislike, and almost of detestation; not the words merely by which he conveys

conveys his sentiments to you ; but those dispositions, which by language he has only communicated to you the knowledge, that he is possessed of, and which you must form a competent idea of, before you can love him on that account : And are these dispositions the objects of sense ? It may perhaps be answered, that it is their being made visible by a series of benevolent actions which causes your regard.

Suppose then the same actions performed, and the same degree of good communicated by a bad man upon some selfish view of private interest; though in that case you are equally pleased with the action, I mean the good communicated; will

you have an equal esteem for the agent : No : Is it not plain then, that your affection for the man arises merely from the pre-conceived opinion of something intrinsically good in himself, abstracted from the consideration of any consequent effects, that may thereby be produced ; which affection would continue equally strong, supposing him placed in such a situation as to put it absolutely out of his power to be useful to society, or in any method serviceable or assistant to his fellow creatures. What is this something then intrinsically good in him ? or in what manner is it to be discovered by any of the organs of sense ? yet ask yourself if you are not intimately conscious of what is meant by it.

Are

Are you not convinced that these perishable bodies are at present actuated by an immaterial principle which we call the soul ? These terms, immaterial principle, or soul, either have, or have not some determinate signification affixed to them ; if they have not, we dispute merely about words, and can neither understand each other or ourselves ; and consequently all argument is at an end—if they have—must they not convey an idea of something, which not being the object of sense, could never be received by the organs of sensation ? and which, though every man may understand for himself, yet none can intelligibly explain to another, because we have, whilst thus united to the body, no way of communicating

cating any ideas, that are independant of matter, all illustrations being necessarily drawn from thence; which, in this case, bearing no sort of analogy, become entirely useless. This holds good, as to spirit in general, and with regard to all superior beings up to the Supreme, of whom no rational and religious man will surely say, that he is incapable of forming any idea; for then it must necessarily follow that he cannot possibly have any proper object of worship, or be at all qualified for the discharge of any of those duties, which, by the general consent of mankind, in all ages, have been deemed the just tribute of dependant creatures to their Creator.

That

That a certain sense of pain or pleasure arises from, and is acquired by material ideas, is granted; but this sense of merely corporeal pain or pleasure, bears not any proportion, either in nature or degree, to that arising from more refined and abstracted ideas; the latter existing solely in the mind, can neither be described or illustrated by the former, having no sort of similitude to them; and instead of being assisted or increased, are interrupted and clogged by the interposition of matter: Every pain, every pleasure, that can be received by the organs of sense, may be so expressed, as to convey a tolerably just idea of it to another; but that sweet complacency, that true satisfaction, that perfect happiness we enjoy

enjoy in the conversation of a friend, highly esteemed, and tenderly beloved, neither language can paint, or any ideas drawn from sense explain: This the experience of those few whose minds are capable of the most exalted heights of friendship, will prove to themselves; and such only are sensible of the utter impossibility of expressing what they feel to be equally true and undelineable.

Many similar instances might be brought to strengthen the argument, which, to me, amount almost to a demonstration, that the mind has in itself some store of notions independant of, and even unconnected with, matter. That it has also pre-dispositions I think evident from the different

rent propensities observable in the earliest infancy. Do not these seem in a manner interwoven with the foul, or, at least, coeval with it? All the art of education is frequently found insufficient to alter them ; they grow up with the child, increase with his years, and, at last, stamp the character of the man.

I fear taking up too much of your time, which, without doubt, may be always employed in a much more useful manner than by perusing any thing I am capable of writing on this subject, yet cannot pass over in silence your definition of friendship, which to me appears more applicable to that universal benevolence

nevolence due to the whole race of mankind.

“ Friendship,” say you, “ is that tie between individuals which obliges them to serve each other as far as possible.” Is this anything more than the tie of humanity, by which all our fellow creatures have a right to demand such service from us? and can you put this general band of society upon a level with that tender attachment between individuals which we call friendship? Is not the last of a much more noble kind, and an infinitely stronger cement? What I understand by that term is, an esteem founded on real merit, on reason and virtue, heightened and improved by affection,

tion, of a nature so disinterested, as, at all times, to prefer the advantage, ease, and happiness of him, to whom we have given the name of friend, to any selfish consideration; and to be ever ready to assist him, not only at the expence of fortune, but even at the hazard of life; such an entire and perfect union of minds, as if the same immaterial principle animated the different bodies, and that nothing but the interposing clog of matter withheld them (if the expression may be admitted) from mixing with each other. This only, in my opinion, deserves the name of friendship; thus defined, 'tis the best gift of heaven, the sovereign balm to all the evils of mortality, which, unpossessed, life boasts not any thing that

that can reasonably raise a wish for its continuance.—Yet what numbers travel to the grave unconscious of any such delightful connection through their whole passage ! and, consequently, how few are capable of forming any conception of the refined enjoyments arising from it. These mental pleasures are not to be equalled, but by the pain arising from the deprivation of them ; they are unknown by, and unintelligible to more than half mankind ; are absolutely independant of matter, or of any ideas thereby impressed, and in themselves so infinitely superior to all that can be imparted by the sensitive powers only, that, on the one hand, they will render the mind incapable of attending to, or

almost of feeling corporeal pain; and, on the other, prevent a possibility of receiving pleasure from any thing that by the organs of sense can be administred: This is a fact of which I have frequently experienced the truth.

As so many wiser people than myself have opposed my opinion with regard to innate ideas, 'tis most probable, that mine may be wrong; perhaps I am a little too tenacious of a favourite hypothesis, but confess myself still so far from allowing the mind to depend on matter for its notions, that I am rather inclined to believe it existed prior to the formation of these bodies in some higher

state, where it had the free exertion of all its faculties, and for the punishment of some fault there committed, is here imprisoned, clogged, and confined by matter, so as to restrain its native powers, and lay it under the hard necessity of being indebted to the bodily organs for the major part of its ideas ; and that those spirits, who, in their pre-existing state, were least guilty, are less incumbered by matter in their present situation ; and are permitted to retain some of their former refined ideas, which impart to them a more exquisite kind of happiness while here, than the rest of mankind can form any notion of.—This it must be owned is mere theory, and can

be

be supported only by probable conjecture; therefore I shall not attempt to defend it against any objections you may raise; but is it not a good method of accounting for the difference of understanding amongst mankind, consistent with an equality in the dispensations of Providence, which the structure of the body is in the whole species too nearly the same to be the cause of? and yet what a regular gradation is visible from the philosopher down to the ideot.

On looking over your letter I find that I have forgot to take notice of your definition of the breath of life: A most singular one it is; which,

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if just, must put a period to the expectation or hope of immortality, as it would amount to little less than a proof, that the moment this breath of life, or immaterial principle, ceased to be united to that material vehicle which was to bring it into action, it must necessarily lose the power of acting at all, and be as totally extinguished as the fire which you have brought by way of illustration, when there remained no more combustible matter to be consumed. As I know you to be a very good Christian, I think you was not aware of this natural consequence of your assertion; and therefore believe it unnecessary to endeavour to confute an argument, that your own principles will not admit

admit the unavoidable deductions from.

I will not apologize for the many inaccuracies I am sensible of in this epistle.—The proper arrangement of argument your present correspondent is at all times unqualified for, and now more particularly so from bad health. All that has been aimed at was to make myself understood, if that intention has succeeded 'tis sufficient, nor shall I expect any severe criticism from you upon the many faults that may be found in the method, diction, or expression. 'Tis high time to break off, least your patience should be exhausted by the length of a letter so little entertaining—will there-

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fore detain you no longer than
to subscribe myself, with much
esteem,

Yours, &c.

L E T-

LETTER VIII.

To Mrs. G—.

AS it is not my intention, my dear friend, to write a regular and circumstantial history of Mrs. P.—'s whole life, but only to give you those most material incidents of it, that particularly point out her true character, and account for any apparent inconsistencies in her conduct, I shall proceed immediately to answer your inquiry, viz. "What motives could possibly lead her to a resolution so destructive to that peculiar plan of happiness she had

K 4 " formed

" formed to herself, as the becoming
" a wife must necessarily be."—

This, I am persuaded, (had the blessing of a very sensible mother's life been continued to her) would never have been occasioned by any thing, but a conviction that her favourite system was impracticable, which might probably never have happened. Unfortunately, the loss of this tender mistress when not nineteen years old, after a tedious illness which, for three preceding years, had rendered her often incapable of attending to any thing but the painful sensations occasioned by it, produced so many disagreeable alterations in her domestic life, as to make the home scene (which her mother had always studied to render pleasing,
by

by suiting it to her natural disposition) almost insupportable.

Her father's character was to the full as singular as her own, tho' of a very different cast; a slight sketch of it will be necessary to give a just idea of her situation when left solely to his care. A better heart never inhabited a human breast; he possessed all the *amiable* qualities of the mind to an excess, that, in their effects, sometimes rendered them blamable; his natural capacity was so good, that, had he ever applied himself to those studies which improve the understanding, he might have made no mean figure in the literary world, and certainly would have acted very judiciously in his whole

sphere of conduct ; but having early taken a religious bent, his whole thoughts were so turned towards another life, that he was literally ignorant of the common customs of the world, in which he lived. This ignorance, of which he was perfectly conscious, disposed him to be readily guided in all matters relative to it, by persons of whose probity he had a good opinion, and by this means was, before his marriage, led into innumerable inconveniencies, by designing people, as the native openness of his heart rendered him incapable of suspicion. — The particulars of his history are by no means necessary to my present purpose ; suffice it only to say, that he had the good fortune to meet with a wife perfectly

perfectly qualified to supply this deficiency in himself. Her sense was strong and masculine, her observations accurate, and her judgment sound. She was religious without superstition, pious without enthusiasm, or ostentation. Read much, and lived much in the polite world, where she was never dissipated, but always carried that philosophical turn which was natural to her. Happy was the daughter under such a mother, who knew how to regulate, without appearing to restrain, the vivacity of her inclination. To the early loss of this able conductress, may be imputed all the misfortunes of my friend's life, who was scarcely sixteen, when the fatal disorder commenced, that, by a tedious and most painful

painful progress, in a few years, removed for ever from her this inestimable blessing. To increase the weight of this affliction, her father had unhappily conceived the highest opinion imaginable of the prudence of a female relation, who, besides that affected prudery which women generally acquire by living to the age of fifty unmarried, was not less ignorant than himself of every polite accomplishment ; equally unacquainted with the world, and equally incapable of directing a young sprightly girl how to act properly in it ; with the greater disadvantage of believing herself perfectly qualified for the office ; this good woman was greatly influenced by two others, who had less understanding and more foibles ;

they

they had all passed their whole lives in a crowd of company, but without making any of those observations, on which only a just judgment can be formed, either of men, or manners; to this indeed a much higher capacity, and far greater strength of reason was necessary than what had fallen to the share of either.

'Twas hardly possible to have picked out a set of people more unequal to the difficult task of prudently managing my young friend, or more likely to drive her to some fatal resolution by the errors of their own judgment, when those errors unhappily received the sanction of a father's authority: Their contracted capacities extended no farther than
the

the bare perception of any immediate act, without a possibility of discerning its nature, by tracing it up to the origin; nor could they form even a notion of that necessary penetration, which, in a well qualified governor, passes through every improper action in his pupil, directly to the motive, which had produced it, in order to apply the remedy judiciously, where only it can be essentially serviceable.

This leads me to relate a whimsical anecdote, which is no otherwise worth repeating, than as it may serve to prove the truth of the preceding assertion; unless it be considered as a caricature of that romantic turn, which all young girls are, in some degree,

degree, apt to imbibe from the *arcadia*, though very few have been wild enough to think of realizing any part of the imaginary scene.

Her mother, after two years illness, hoping to find some relief by the change of air, or rather of place, not being able to bear any long journey, removed to a little village in the neighbourhood, accompanied by her husband, daughter, and the good old gentlewoman above-mentioned. Whether it was owing merely to the effect which a strong impression on the mind frequently has on the nervous system, or whether in reality the air could, at so small a distance, be more salutary, I shall not pretend to determine, but certain

certain it was, that Mrs. M—— soon thought herself much better, and, for some time, really appeared to be so.

The long preceding melancholy scene, which had suppressed her daughter's natural vivacity, without extinguishing it, seemed now to give way to a more cheerful prospect, the young mind eagerly received the pleasing impression, without examining into the falacious foundation of its hopes. The gaiety of heart returned——every object wore a new face——the rural scene was full of charms, and with the help of a lively imagination, a new Arcadia might be raised: Charmed with the sudden thought, not a moment was given

given to consideration—Miss M— was instantly transformed into the shepherdess Amanda: No circumstance of dress was forgot, neither were the crook or scrip omitted; her maid was habited in the same taste, but in a less singular manner: Thus metamorphosed they went in quest of a neighbouring farmer: The old man entered chearfully into the humour, and led them to the flock— The scene was incompleat without a shepherd, he pointed to his three sons and offered her the choice; two of whom, with rustic gallantry, immediately declared themselves candidates.—At once she then foresaw all the ill-natured reflections that might be

made on her conversing with youths in so low a station, who had boldness enough to speak with ease and freedom to her ; pride took the alarm, and she was on the point of relinquishing the project ; but while deliberating with herself, observed the third, a stupid lad, had crept behind a hay-rick, trembling with the apprehension of being spoke to. His appearance revived her hopes of pursuing the frolic, with as much security from censure, as innocence of intention. She called the frightened youth, but called repeatedly in vain ; who, immovable as a statue, was proof against all the rustic raillery of his fellows, and would neither come forwards, or vouchsafe an answer.

Every

Every objection, that reason had the preceding moment prudently raised, vanished before such a shepherd. She no longer hesitated,—advanced towards him, put a garland on his head, and bid him wear it as a mark of her favour. Convinced of his unalterable stupidity by a nearer and more accurate observation, she retired highly delighted with having found a swain whose awful distance, she imagined, must sufficiently secure her from scandal even amongst the most malicious. In this opinion she pursued, and enjoyed the whimsical amusement, fearless of any ill consequence; went every evening from the flock to a field where he was reaping, carried him a new garland,

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and made her maid spread a repast on a grassy bank, to regale him and his fellow labourers, who all sat down together on the ground, and partook the refreshment. In him she was not mistaken; for tho' on these occasions, she diverted herself by asking a thousand questions, the stupid lad gave no other proof of his capacity to form articulate sounds, than by the words yes, no, if you please, and thank ye.

To the novelty of the scene was added a double pleasure by the singularity of the whim.—But alas! this was soon succeeded by a sad reverse. The shepherd's garland was unfortunately remarked by the careful old Gentlewoman in one of her evening

evening walks. The odd appearance excited a curiosity that was instantly gratified by a recital of every circumstance, which not a peasant in the village was ignorant of.—Big with a tale of such importance she hasten'd home, called Mr. M—— aside,—related the horrid story, as painted by her own imagination, with a thousand aggravating suppositions, and false conclusions; by which a mere childish frolick, that was perfectly innocent in its intention, and would have proved as harmless in its consequences, was magnified into a premeditated design of eloping from her father with a young fellow of the meanest kind, without a single qualification to recommend him; whose extreme stupidity was alone

sufficient to convince any rational person, that it was impossible for her to have taken the least degree of liking to. The good old Gentleman had too just an opinion of his daughter to believe she had any such intention, yet by two hours persuasion was led to believe, even in that case, there could at least be no harm in taking every prudent precaution to prevent the possibility of so dreadful an event. In consequence of which, the crook was instantly burnt, her cloaths locked up, her maid dismissed, and Miss forbade to stir out of the house without leave. In vain did she represent the injustice of such a proceeding, state the case in its true light, and shew that such a conduct in

in her relations would naturally give rise to conjectures as injurious to her character as they were false in themselves. The mistaken Gentlewoman, full of her own imagined consequence, and deaf to all the arguments of sense and reason, answered only by the most provoking insinuations; congratulated herself on the fortunate discovery; adding the strongest assurances of her future vigilance; and concluding with a wise remark, that she had always said, too much care could not be taken of young people; to watch narrowly, and keep a strict hand over them, was the only way!

A moment's reflection will suggest to you, my dear friend, what a

girl of Miss M——'s lively sensations must feel from so improper a treatment; and in what sovereign contempt she must hold the judgment of a person who, by these unnecessary and ill-juged precautions, could give room for a supposition that she had been discovered on the point of running away with a peasant; a step, so totally inconsistent with her natural turn and temper, that a very moderate degree of penetration would have discovered it to be next to impossible, even for the unkindest treatment at home to have excited the most distant thought of. Tho' she evidently saw the folly of such a proceeding, and the injurious consequences of it to herself, there was

no remedy but by an application to her mother, whose state of health was too precarious to hazard the mention of a thing that might at all agitate her mind. She had seen the young shepherdess in her whimsical habit, knew her heart perfectly, and was under no apprehension of any long continuance of this romantic frolic, or of its being carried to any dangerous length; was more pleased at her having found an innocent method of diverting her thoughts a little from the constant painful scene at home, than hurt by the flighty manner of it. 'Tis true, she knew not the circumstance of the shepherd, nor that it was talked of in the village, and, consequently, might be miscon-

misconstrued ; but even in that case, would only have represented to her, that the innocence of intention was not sufficient to justify an action that mistaken, or malicious people, might see, or endeavour to place, in a light obnoxious to censure ; and have urged those convincing reasons which would have made it as much her own act to desist from, as it was to commence so peculiar a kind of diversion. This is the chief art of education, which no person was a more perfect mistress of than this good Lady. After her daughter was capable of understanding reasonable arguments (which children of a good capacity certainly are, much earlier than it is generally believed) she never imposed a positive command, or made a mother's

ther's authority a rule of action ; but by easy steps led her young perception to discover the beauty of rectitude, and the deformity of every deviation from it ; and plainly made appear the motives for, and justice of those directions, which were always given by way of friendly advice : Thus the correction of any wrong tendency, or improper inclination, seemed to be, and indeed literally was, her own choice, guided by the conviction of her judgment ; and, as such, always received the highest commendation.

Long habituated to this rational method of instruction, she could ill bear the thought of submitting to an absolute authority, which would have

been in itself extreamly irksome, but when exercised by a person, whose abilities were inferior to her own, and whose plan of conduct she evidently saw the impropriety of ; it became insupportable.—However, this once she resolved to submit patiently, in the flattering hope that her mother's recovery would put a period to her distresses, but, at the same time, resolving that should those hopes unfortunately prove abortive, then to embrace the only alternative, rather than be subjected to the tyrannical government of so improper a directress. This resolution was afterwards unhappily put in practice.

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The ensuing winter the cruel disease put a final period to all her hopes, and within six months after that the domestic scene was rendered so miserable, by daily injunctions equally absurd and provoking, that it seemed hardly possible to exchange it for a worse. Hence you see the origin of the most fatal step in my friend's life, from which has flowed all the subsequent misfortunes of it. — Thus, my dear, it generally happens when imprudent people interfere in things that they neither understand or have any business with; they become literally the sole cause of realizing their own fears, by the ridiculous methods they take to prevent evils,

of which there was not the least degree of probability but what existed in their absurd imagination.

Happy would it be for one half of mankind if the other could be persuaded to attend only to their own proper business—but unfortunately, those who are least able to regulate their own conduct, generally fancy themselves best qualified to direct that of others, and in this employment, of which they never can be capable, waste more time than would have served to make such improvements in their own minds, as might have rendered them useful members of that society, to which they are a constant torment.—What a length of letter have I run through ! While writing

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on this subject you will have no reason to complain of blank pages, if my health permits their being filled up.—The post allows me not time for more this evening than to say that, with the utmost truth and tenderness, I shall ever be most faithfully

Yours.

LET-

LETTER IX.

To Miss Louisa —.

My dear Louisa,

YOUR concern for the unfortunate Harriot will not be abated by the certainty of her present situation. She is in lodgings at a country village near London, which were provided for her by the person suspected to have been the cause of her elopement; and where, within a month after her arrival, she became the mother of a child, whose birth has stamped an indelible mark of infamy on her character. The moment

ment her father became acquainted with this unhappy circumstance he, very properly, sent to intreat her to quit the man who had been the author of her ruin ; and, on this condition, promised to settle on her an allowance sufficient to support her handsomely, in any retired place she should make choice of, and to provide also for the little one. She thanked him for a kindness so little expected, but declined accepting it ; alledging, that, as she was perfectly happy at present, any exchange must be for the worse.—In vain have they since represented to her the unavoidable consequences of continuing in a way of life that must universally be condemned ; and which would for ever exclude her from the society of

the good and valuable part of mankind ; that, the quitting it immediately, and retiring to some distant country, where, in a good neighbourhood, that knew not her unfortunate history, a future prudent conduct might make her well received, was the only method that could possibly restore her father's peace, or save herself from that misery which must inevitably be the result of persisting in the indulgence of so criminal a passion. — She is deaf to all persuasion. Mr. —— has had art enough to make her believe that it has been long his intention to obtain a divorce, and pretends to have sufficient proof, after which she expects to become his wife, this delusion has probably been the chief cause of her ruin ; such

such most certainly it is, for the prudence of Mrs. —— has been so remarkable that tho' separated from her husband, he is the only person who speaks ill of her; a very extraordinary circumstance, which, in a world so fond of scandal, amounts almost to a demonstration that he has nothing material to alledge against her, nor do I believe ever entertained a thought of attempting it. Harriot's situation is greatly to be lamented, who sees not at present the dreadful consequences that must soon ensue. Her mother has seen no company of late, and 'tis believed will never recover the dejection of spirits occasioned by this unfortunate affair. The old Gentleman had lately the mortification of being upbraided, at a public meeting,

with the scandal this unhappy daughter had brought on his family, by a low person whom his supercilious behaviour had offended ; and who, incapable of feeling the indelicacy, gladly embraced this opportunity of taking the most cruel kind of revenge. The haughty carriage of his eldest daughter seems a little lowered by the accident, she is endeavouring to persuade her father to quit a country where her pride is frequently offended by mortifying insinuations, and unmannerly comparisons, and will probably prevail with him to remove.

Whatever may be the misfortunes of Harriot, her parents, if they have any virtuous sensibility, must be more than

than equal sufferers ; who have to accuse themselves, not only for permitting before their eyes the daily progress of her unhappy affection, but for neglecting to inspire her young mind with principles that would have guarded her heart against the attacks of this criminal passion. Her disposition was naturally good, and her temper so pliant that it could have been formed to any thing ; the soil was capable of producing the most valuable plants, but, for want of cultivation, over-run with spontaneous weeds ; amongst which, her mother often accidentally dropped the seeds of vanity and false pride, which were the natural growth of her own mind. Harriot was never taught any thing but to dress, dance,

M 3 and

and play at cards ; in the last, she made a very early proficiency, that being the daily employment of the family ; Mr. —— was generally one of their party, and by this means had access to Harriot at all times ; to whom his particular attention was remarked by all but those whose principal business it was to have observed, and prevented the fatal effects of it.—This immoderate love of play is destructive of every thing valuable in the mind possessed by it ; nor do I think any vice in the mistress of a family, can be productive of worse consequences, exclusive even of the pernicious effects of such an example to her children. I am myself of opinion, that so far from letting children learn to play at any game, cards should

should not even be given them to divert themselves with when very little, nor should they ever be permitted to see others play; and approve much of my Lord L——'s not suffering them to enter his doors after his eldest child was two years old, and dismissing a servant in whose pocket a pack was found.

Such a law, in the family we are speaking of, would very probably have prevented the irreparable misfortune they have all at present but too much cause to lament. The anxiety with which you enquire into the particulars of this unhappy event, has led me to dwell so much longer than I intended on the disagreeable subject, that my paper will hardly

permit my telling you the pleasure with which I read your remarks on Alphonso's adventures.

Your criticisms are in general so just as to afford an excellent proof of your judgment. I cannot, however, agree with you in thinking it unnatural for Alphonso to sleep under the extreme agitation of mind wherein he is described to lay down in the tent of Rodolphus; in this part of the story I do not think the bounds of probability are exceeded, which is more than I can say in every instance.—Notwithstanding the witty Duke of Buckingham, and some others of the same class, have endeavoured to turn this dormant scene into ridicule, I am by no means of opinion

opinion that it is in itself at all absurd. When the mind is disturbed by things that rather irritate than oppress, there is no possibility of sleeping on the softest pillow; but when wounded by affliction of the most grievous kind, if a vent is then given to the anguish by a violent flow of tears, the spirits, as when exhausted by extreme fatigue of body, will sink to rest, and sleep naturally ensue. This truth I have more than once proved by experience; from thence, am certain in both cases of the effect; and in the present, preceding corporeal labour must be taken into the account. I am therefore of opinion that here our author cannot be justly censured for an unnatural description.

May

May you, my dear Louisa, never experience that poignant anguish which alone can prove the truth of this representation; but may every stage of your life be replete with all the blessings your virtues deserve, and your friends wish to see you possessed of; amongst the warmest of that number you may justly rank.

Your affectionate, &c. &c.

The

*The adventures of ALPHONSO con-
tinued.*

I Was in some doubt whether to descend or not ; at length the uncertainty and hazard of the attempt deterred me, and I resolved to go back to the tent, and consult Rodolphus ; yet could not persuade myself to quit the place, but stood for some minutes gazing on it with fixed attention, 'till an irresistible impulse urged me to despise the danger, and pursue my first intention : The descent was not difficult ; I went very chearfully on a considerable way, in some places the openings were spacious, in others more confined, the

light diminishing from above as my distance from the surface increased, I began to be apprehensive of total darkness; and had some thoughts of going back to provide myself with a light; when I was greatly terrified with the appearance of a ball of fire about the size of a large cannon shot, which played so near my head, that it seemed almost impossible to escape the destruction threatened; I hardly knew what to resolve on; but thought the only chance of safety was to return back immediately, by which means it might be possible to get out of its reach before it burst. Scarce had I formed this resolution when the ball lighted on my shoulder, from thence descended to the ground and disappeared, by which, to my

my inexpressible satisfaction, I found it to be only a luminous vapour, without heat, and perfectly harmless; my joy at this discovery equalled the terror occasioned by apprehending it to be a ball of actual fire, and my satisfaction increased on observing two others of the same kind arise immediately after, which vanished as the former, and was again succeeded by fresh ones; the constant succession of these vapours gave such a continued light as to supply the absence of day, which facilitated my design; nor did I doubt, by their illumination, to descend safely to the bottom.

Having recovered my fright, I stood some moments reflecting with surprize

surprise on the cause of it. That a man who had just irretrievably lost all that was dear and valuable to him in this world, nor had any present means of procuring even the necessaries of life, and who but a few hours before was eagerly courting death even in a painful form, should now be thus terrified at the thought of its approach in a manner the most easy and instantaneous, seemed scarcely to be accounted for: From whence without any alteration of circumstances, cried I aloud, could proceed so sudden a change of sentiment? Wherefore should I now wish the continuance of a life that for me no longer has a charm to boast—why dread the death I lately sought, and which alone can restore my former
happi-

happiness; strange inconsistency of human nature! amazing contradiction! how vain, how weak, how foolish, is the mind of man, reasoning for no end, uncertain in its conjectures, unsteady in its resolves, ignorant of itself; conscious of being, but, with all its faculties, unable either to account for, or even discover the mode of its own existence!—

What is this boasted reason but an ignis-fatuus of the mind, that more oft misleads than guides us right? of what use the resolutions, formed on those philosophic principles that seem to dignify the human soul, if she can be by foreign force impelled to act in opposition to her deliberate choice and calm determination?—or if left by heaven a prey to every sud-

den

den start of passion, what avails a prudent plan of conduct, that no care can secure from these unavoidable interruptions?—Ah! whither leads this thought—to what a maze of painful doubt! Man may perhaps be so insignificant a link in the great Chain of Being that, like apes to him, he serves for sport to some superior order—Yet here religion should sustain the mind with better hopes—but on what rests the certainty of that religion? on Faith? Faith in our priests, who may perhaps mislead us, or be themselves deceived?—Some hold the Alcoran sacred as we deem the Gospel—the Jews reject them both—China adores the Sun, Egypt the Crocodile; all think their system right, and tax the rest with blind

blind credulity—And may not all be wrong alike, and every system false? Oh! for an unerring guide to solve these endless doubts! Here, for a while, I paused, forgot my situation, and even the motives that had led me to this subterraneous search; lost myself in reflecting on the various vicissitudes of human life without a possibility of accounting for them; my thoughts grew every moment more bewildered, and led me to so general a scepticism, that I began almost to doubt my own existence; when I felt a very sensible proof of its reality, by the pain of hunger, and an extreme faintness, like what is usually occasioned by too long an abstinence. As I could not

Suppose that more than an hour had elapsed since I had quitted the tent of Redolphi, I knew not how to account for the unnatural suddenness of this sensation; however that I was ill found it impossible to subsist much longer without food — 'twas vain to lament the not having taken any with me, the only method of procuring it was by returning to the ruined city — no time remained for deliberation; the rage of appetite, every moment increasing, grew so violent that the most noxious animal should have seemed a delicious repast. This grieved beyond expression to be rendered this incapable of pursuing my project; there was no alternative but to perish by fast.

Chapter

II. I mine,

mine, or hasten back to the town. I did not hesitate on the choice—— but guess at my astonishment when attempting to ascend, I found my whole frame so debilitated, that my trembling knees, unable to discharge their office, bent beneath my weight; while the feeble grasp of my enervated arm, had scarce sufficient strength to save me from stumbling headlong into the abyss beneath. Convinced by this of the utter impossibility of my ever reaching the surface, I gave over the attempt, and began to ruminate on the deplorable situation to which I was reduced. I have already told you, that the cavity in the heart was unequal in some places so narrow as to be but just

passable, in others very spacious; that part where I now was, appeared, by the light the vapours afforded, to be about three yards in diameter; the step, if it may be so called, on which I rested, was something less than a yard broad; on this, when the pain of hunger recalled me from my late reverie, I found myself lying at full length, but knew not how I came to be in that posture, and well remembered that I was on my feet, and in the action of descending, when I stopped to indulge a few reflections on my late fright: On this I now sunk down again, without a hope of ever rising from it. 'Tis impossible to describe what passed at this moment in my breast; I accused myself

myself of presumption and temerity, in entering the chasm ; and of impiety in my late exclamation and transient infidelity ; believed my present weakness (which from natural causes I could no way account for) to be the immediate punishment of my crime ; and owned the justice of that dispensation that while living, had confined me to the grave I had so late impatiently demanded ; full of these reflections, in an almost agonizing agitation of mind, I addressed myself to the supream disposer of all events in the following manner. —

Oh ! Almighty Father of the Universe, Omniscient and Supream ! to the doubt of whose existence my utmost scepticism has never extended,

Dear

N 3

Look

look down with pity on me, accept that integrity of heart by which thou knowest all the actions of my life have been directed, pardon the failies of intemperate grief, which, under the severe affliction of the few last days, have led me to repine at thy unerring dispensations — I foresee the painful and tedious method of my approaching dissolution, am sensible of the utter impossibility of escaping it, yet, far from murmur-ing at a fate so dreadful, I yield submissive to thy sovereign will, and own the punishment deserved ; yet oh ! permit me to implore that all my sufferings may end with my mortality, and my departing spirit be received to those blessed regions where,

in

in the vision of the night, I held a
fancied converse with my dearest Art-
tumiss: — Forgive the frailties of
a creature so imperfect, and impute
not as a crime the weakness of hu-
manity. — I would have proceeded,
but my little remains of strength was
so exhausted by this exertion, that
the power of speech forsook me; my
lips moved, but I could no longer pro-
nounce any articulate sound; even my
thoughts grew confused; and my eyes
involuntarily closed themselves; —
I still retained my senses, and silently
recommended my departing soul in
to the hands of its Creator; my limbs
were now become motionless, the
cold that had some time invaded
them seemed hastening to the vitals;

and convinced me, that the extreme languor I felt, could be no other than the article of death. I was perfectly composed, and happy in the thought of its near approach; all my fears were vanished, and I felt a grateful pleasure in the hope of an immediate release. At this instant a voice more melodious than I can describe, or you conceive any idea of, distinctly called, Alphonso! I concluded it must come from my beloved Antimissa, who was waiting to be the first that should welcome me into immortality. In vain I strove to answer, in vain lamented the impossibility of forming any articulate sound, and impatiently longed to burst the bands which still confined

me

sue to a material prison.—The voice came nearer, and again it cried;

“ Alphonso ! look up Alphonso, and with gratitude receive the peculiar favour of Heaven.”—At this, exerting my utmost force, I raised my head (which from reclining on my arm had sunk with my face bending toward the ground) and turning my eyes towards the place from whence I thought the sound had proceeded, beheld the beauteous youth who, in the vision of the preceding night, had been presented to me; amazed at this appearance, I began to suspect my being still in a dream, when coming closer to me he said, “ Receive, Alphonso, that returning vigour which the great Author of

“ the

" the universe permits me to restore
 " to you.—I perceived in his hand a
 transparent body, apparently about a
 span in diameter; its form irregular,
 and its resemblance so near to water
 as not to be known from a fluid, but
 by that cohesion of its particles which
 preserved a form entire tho' unsus-
 tained by any vessel. This he di-
 vided into three equal parts, applied
 one to my mouth, one to my nostrils,
 and pressing the other between his
 hands over my face, it instantly dis-
 appeared; a thin mist succeeded,
 and, for a moment surrounded me;
 this was done in much less time than
 it has taken to relate it, and tho' I
 distinctly saw the operation, I could
 not feel that any thing touched me;

but sensibly found the air, I now breathed, beyond expressionoderife-
tous, and felt an enjoyment in-
initely superior to what I could ever
before have formed any conception
of—my strength was instantly re-
stored—my spirit seemed free as air,
and I was no longer sensible of any
incumbrance from matter; I started
from the ground, and was going to
kneel at the feet of my deliverer in
grateful acknowledgments of the be-
nefits received. Perceiving my in-
tention, he cried, “ forbear, Al-
“ phonso! your thanks are due only
“ to that Almighty Power who has
“ favoured you beyond the race of
“ of mortals, and permits me to
“ explain to you the causes of those
“ events

“ events in the conduct of that plan
“ net you inhabit, that exceed the
“ reach of human capacity. Attend
“ in silence, know me for your
“ guardian angel, who, from the
“ moment of your birth, even to
“ this last hour of extreme distress,
“ have never left you.”



End of the First Volume.

1 Aug 3

After reading for hours and hours I
have become quite familiar with the
Baptists and their history, and
I am now well aware of
the difficulties and the trials
of those early days of freedom
in this country. I have been
very glad to learn of the
way that various men